

REMARKS

Claims 1-10, 15, 23, 25-27, 44-49, and 62-70 are now pending in the application. Briefly, Claim 1 was rewritten to include the limitations of Claims 11 and 12, which is indicated as being allowable. Claims 7, 15, 26, and 44 have been rewritten in independent form, including the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1, 13, 23, 49, and 62 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

At the outset, Applicants wish to note that although Claim 62 is listed as being rejected under §112, second paragraph, there are no reasons given for this rejection. However, on the other hand, Claim 62 is cited on the Office Action Summary page as being allowed. Therefore, Applicants assume that Claim 62 is allowed and that no rejections are asserted thereagainst.

With regard to the remaining claims, Applicants submit that the term "reduced", especially when used in the following context "a reduced energy spread as compared to said first group", provides one skilled in the art a standard upon which to determine the requisite degree. However, in the interest of expediting the prosecution of the present application, Applicants have elected to amend the claims or cancel such claims. If the

Examiner believes modified language is necessary, he is invited to contact the undersigned. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the present rejection are respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 9, 10, 13, 23, 25, 28, 34-36, 43 and 50 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sprangle et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,137,811). Claims 1-6, 13, 23, 28-33, 50-58, 61, 64 and 65 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Neil (U.S. Pat. No. 5,541,944). These rejections are respectfully traversed. In the interest of expediting prosecution, Applicants have rewritten the objected-to claims in independent form or, alternatively, canceled the effected claims. Accordingly, Applicants submit that these rejections have been overcome and/or rendered moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the present rejections are respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-7, 11, 13, 14, 50, 59 and 60 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schoen (U.S. Pat. No. 6,333,966) in view of Neil (U.S. Pat. No. 5,541,944). This rejection is respectfully traversed. In the interest of expediting prosecution, Applicants have rewritten the objected-to claims in independent form or, alternatively, canceled the effected claims. Accordingly, Applicants submit that this rejection has been overcome and/or rendered moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the present rejection are respectfully requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

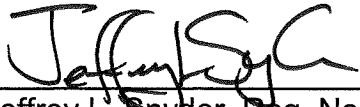
The Examiner states that Claims 8, 12, 15, 26, 27, 44, 45, 66 and 67 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the claims to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Therefore, each of the pending claims should now be in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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